Mat-Su Monitor

March 2012

Art Director Bach to Retire

By Hattie Schmidtkunz

Suzanne Bach, who is originally from North Carolina and has worked at Matanuska-Susitna College since 2002, is now planning to retire.

She has an undergraduate degree in Interior Design from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a Master's degree in Environmental Design, and two years of Architecture studies from the University of California at Berkeley.

She began as Art Department Coordinator, part time, and in 2004, her job changed to Fine Arts Coordinator. In 2006 she became a full time faculty member. Bach worked for two years to bring the Machetanz Art Festival into existence at the college, which was a success last summer in its first year.

How did you end up in Alaska?

I came to Alaska during college with a friend who had parents who lived in Fairbanks. I got a taste of Alaska and I wanted to come back. When I finished college I came up and I came to see Anchorage, not just Fairbanks. I fell in love with the inlet around Potter's Marsh. I thought, "Wow this is like North Carolina but bigger." I saw in the newspaper that there was an opening for an interior designer. I applied for the job and got it. I went back to California, got my belongings and came to Alaska.

How long have you been teaching?

I've been teaching at the college level since 2002; before that I had a studio in Anchorage, which my husband and I ran. We had a hundred and twenty students a week, about 80% of those were children and then

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Walking in the Woods with Dune Lankard

By Jake Magooon

On February 24th, 2012, Dune Lankard came to speak to the Mat-Su College campus community. Named one of Time Magazine's top 50 "Heroes For The Planet," this social change artist has dedicated a lifetime to the defense of human rights, the protection of the environment, the preservation of Native lands and way of life, and the spread of a message of empowerment. Much of Dune's time with us was spent recounting challenges he has faced in his life, the odds stacked against him, and the methods he used to overcome these challenges and bring people together. Dune put particular emphasis on the importance that we believe in ourselves, and in the power of one person to make a

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Students Journey to Juneau

By Stephen Warta

Every year in February, all the colleges in the University of Alaska system send student representatives to Juneau to talk to legislators about problems with the University and special problems unique to each college. The conference starts on a Saturday and goes through the following Tuesday. This is a great opportunity where students can learn about the legislative process and meet with elected officials in person. This year, two Mat-Su College Student Government senators – Dawn Adamson and Grace Valley – and I were selected to go to Juneau.

Our trip started February 3rd and went through February 7th. After checking into our hotel we had two things on our mind: getting something to eat and buying umbrellas. Once we had procured umbrellas, we headed off to a restaurant called Palomino's, which is located in the Hanger on the Wharf. Palomino's

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Phi Theta Kappa Presents: Chad Carpenter

By Chris Wetzler

At 7 p.m. on Friday, March 30, 2012, the Beta Sigma Epsilon chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Matanuska-Susitna College will be hosting a silent auction fund-raiser at the Matanuska Career and Technical High School located at 2472 N Seward Meridian Parkway in Wasilla. Tickets for the event will be $15 for students and family and $25 for the general public. Dinner is included in the price of your ticket and will be served during the event at 7:30.

The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa is to recognize and encourage scholarship among two-year college students. To achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa provides opportunities for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.

Our goal is to raise funds to help our members attend Phi Theta Kappa events like International Convention; we are able to sponsor $500 to one of our members to attend this year's International Convention in Nashville, Tennessee with the money we raised from our fundraiser last year. We also wish to sponsor local community events, and our chapter is currently working on an Honors in Action project concerning the 2012/2013 study topic: The Culture of Competition. Our hope is to organize an event on campus where we invite the community to help us explore ideas; such as, "To what extent is competitiveness a part of human nature?" or "How do competing ideas about beauty affect food choices? How does this differ throughout the world?"

You can help us in several ways: 1) purchase a ticket and come to the event, 2) sponsor a student or other guest by purchasing a ticket for them, and 3) donate an item for our auction. For more information about the event or to donate an item, please call Chris Wetzler at 746-0674. Our chapter does have a non-profit organization, tax ID number for business deduction purposes. To purchase a ticket, please call the Mat-Su College Campus Cache at 745-9739, option 1, 2, or 3.

Our speaker for last year's event was Dee Dee Jonrowe, and she was very instrumental in helping us with our first successful fund-raising event. This year we are proud to present Chad Carpenter! He is famous for his hilarious "Natures #1 Comic Strip:" Tundra. Please come and hear Mr. Carpenter speak, and then bid on one of our auction items. You will also have the opportunity to help us by being a part of the research we are conducting for our Honors in Action study topic.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and I hope to see you there!

Dance Club Update

By William Scott

Hello, I am William Scott the president of dance club.

I would like to let everyone know we are still a club and holding meetings Friday in FSM 107, and Monday 4-5pm in FSM 103; however, the Tuesday meeting time may be changed if so I will post time and day on our Facebook page - Mat-Su Dance club http://www.facebook.com/groups/182545401827440/. Or send us an e-mail at Mat-Su Dance Club@yahoo.com.

Also we should have T-shirts this semester and we will be holding a few found raisers so I hope to see some new faces.

The club is open to the staff and students. If you do not like dancing with strangers, feel free to bring guests!

Cisco Team Competes in NetRiders

By Jake Magoon

Cisco Networking Academy NetRiders is a global competition. Organized by Cisco, it counts amongst its participating members 10,000 students per year, in over 80 countries worldwide. This competition presents an opportunity for Networking Academy students to compete against one another, based upon their networking skills, via a series of online exams and simulation activities.

In 2001, Professor John Rogers began the Cisco Academy program, and its certification, here at Mat-Su College. After a transition period, Dr. Harry Banks became head of the program. It was student Jason Warta, however, who prompted Harry to make Mat-Su College, the only Cisco certified Networking Academy in Alaska, to compete in the Cisco Networking Academy NetRiders competition in 2010. As such, victory at the state level was easily achieved. However, the truly impressive feat accomplished by Jason Warta and Dawn Adamson, under the guidance of Dr. Banks, was to compete at the North American level.

This competition involved 45 states and provinces, and our freshly created team, competing for the first time in the history of the academy, against schools many times our size with vastly more resources available, came in 20th out of 45. Though fortunes did not fare as well with the 2011 competition due to changing the rules from being team-work oriented to individual competition, the program has certainly been started off on the right foot. 2011 may have been a mixed year in terms of competition results, but something else happened that year which may have made up for it: Mat-Su College received a plaque from Cisco recognizing 10 years as a Cisco certified Networking Academy.

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Bach

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out of that, about 50% were home school students. We taught a lot of home school students.

How did you get into fine arts?

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in '92 and my husband, who was an architect, had cancer in '95. When I got sick, he started to do more of my work in the office and I started doing more painting.

Being ill with cancer transitioned us from architecture and interior design to the fine arts. I took college courses, while studying interior design, in painting, architectural renderings and color design.

It was in 1990 when my husband, who was into sculpting, asked me how he could encourage me to do more painting. I started taking it more seriously and spent more time in the studio with him. I made a commitment in 1990 to paint everyday; I did that for one year.

Once I got started I didn't know when to stop. The time went by really fast. When I got diagnosed with cancer, it gave me an extra push in that direction.

I have been cancer free for twenty years this month. While teaching classes at the Alaska Fine Arts Academy, the position of Director became open. I applied and became the Director, coordinating twenty-two instructors, who taught music, dance, and visual arts. With a name like Bach, I figured I was a good fit.

When did you start teaching at Mat-Su College?

I taught my first class in Interior Design at Mat-Su College in the spring of 2003, however, I taught my first college class at UAA in the fall of 2002. I also taught on the Chugiak-Eagle River campus several semesters during that time.

What is your most memorable experience at Mat-Su College?

The most memorable experience is walking the halls of Mat-Su College for the first time, and knowing that this was my new home, that I belonged here. Reflecting on retirement, I keep thinking the same thing, that I'll feel that same sort of attachment even walking the halls as a past Coordinator.

What are some exciting things going on in the art department?

I'm quite pleased that the fine arts department has expanded enormously. We have more sections of each course than we've ever had, including music appreciation, art appreciation and art history which have really grown. In the fall I'm hoping we will have Intermediate Metalsmithing and Jewelry. I'm working on that right now.

The Fine Arts Advisory Council was formed under my watch and has really opened up community interaction.

This group helped raise $8000 for seed money for the new festival, our signature event. The Machetanz Art Festival, last year was very successful with over two hundred participants and we had fifteen instructors.

This year instead of expanding, we are just trying to make stronger roots and give it a better foundation so that it will stand on its own. Of course the anticipation is that we'll have the new building in 2014, so there will be a lot more offerings that we can have with an auditorium and two big meeting rooms down stairs. Those are all dreams for the future.

Why have you decided to retire now?

I actually decided this five years ago. I bought a vehicle five years ago with the thoughts that it would last me five years and 2012 would be a good year to retire.

What plans do you have now?

After my husband's death in '04, I didn't really expect to have another man in my life but it turns out that I do. We met at one of my art openings. We have started square dancing together; we square dance every week. The plans are to do some traveling and go to the national square dance conference with him and see what else the future brings for us.

I also plan to continue teaching for a while as an adjunct. I'm taking off a couple hats. I will no longer be the director of the Machetanz Art Festival, all though I hope to continue as a volunteer. And I will no longer be the fine arts coordinator. I will be able to teach as an adjunct and spend time with the students, which I really enjoy.

I would also like to spend some time in North Carolina because I grew up there and have a lot of relatives back there. I miss the rhododendron and the cherry blossoms and the persimmons. Those grew in my grandmother's backyard. My brother and I would challenge each other, when we were kids, to eat the persimmons before they were ripe.

In Alaska, do you think there are appropriate venues and resources for local artists to get their work out?

In Alaska, yes. The valley it's a little different. We don't have a museum that focuses on local art shows or traveling exhibits. The Dorothy Page Museum has some traveling exhibits like the photography competition Alaska Positive, they usually get on the circuit for that. During the Iditarod they have a local show where people put in dog pictures.

There's not a room that's designed for museum quality show room lighting and display. It would be great if they incorporated that into the design of the new building here at the college.

Do you have any advice for aspiring artists?

Draw everyday. Take a sketch pad wherever you go. Don't miss an opportunity to share your art. Where would the world be without the culture that we have that encourages promoting of the arts? It just enriches people's lives.

By "every chance to show your work", I don't mean to book yourself in a coffee shop every weekend. If someone is sitting next to you that might want to see what you're doing, don't hesitate to show them or hand them a pencil and say, you can draw a rabbit, I'll show you how. That's what I mean by showing your work. Not necessarily having big shows but to spread the opportunity for people to experience art, whether visually or if they pick up a brush and a pencil and try it themselves.

Which artists do you look up to?

Irvine Shapiro. He was my favorite mentor. I admired his work long before I got to study under him. He is a watercolor artist. I admire Dean Larson and cherish studying under him because he studied under Fred Machetanz. He was the visiting artist for the first Machetanz Art Festival last year.

I'm more inspired by opportunities I have had with living artists or with students of the arts where I can study under someone who studied under someone else. Other artists will be influenced by someone like Cézanne or or Monet. I'm really more into contemporary.

What are you doing now in your own art?

I've been focusing on slick surfaces such as hot press, a kind of paper that has no texture. And yupo, (pronounced U-Poe) which is actually acrylic sheets.

In addition, I also like doing oriental paintings. That's on rice paper, so you would think it would be entirely different, but it's not because they're both a "one stroke painting" technique, where you don't go back and fix it. When it's a slick surface you go back and try to fix it, it will wipe off; and on rice paper, if you try to fix it, you know, it just doesn't work. Those are the main things I like to do right now.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I enjoy writing for the Frontiersman once a month as a guest writer; I started that in July of 2009. I interview other artists who have shows coming up in the valley or who have some significant accomplishments. Also, It's been great being at Mat-Su College. I've really enjoyed this part of my life.

Poetry in Math

By Jake Magoon

Mathematics has a reputation for being cold, regimented, and inflexible. When we think of mathematics, we often think of its many applications, such as physics, engineering, technology. However, did you know that there is poetry in your mathematics? It's more likely than you think. While it is true that the field of mathematics has produced a plethora of useful formulae and information without which our world would be completely unrecognizable, but for some of us, the fact that math is useful is, at most, a fortuitous coincidence.

The beauty of mathematics is that there does not need to be a reason! Mathematics is one of the few areas left in our society today where you are allowed to do something as a career purely for the sake of enjoying it. For example, all of the numbers we use, the variables, and the operational symbols, they all represent ideas. There is no objective "1" out there in the universe, at least not in the way we conceive of it when we work with numbers. As a result, a language has been constructed which utilizes (effectively) arbitrary symbols to snatch a piece of the universe out of the ether and develop a system of managing it – but all of this created in the mind, and the proofs that prove it are products of the mind, as well. In this sense, mathematics is truly one of the most creative of the arts. It is not that mathematics as it exists now is holy writ (though it won't hurt you to treat it that way), rather, the language is created by us and used to capture certain aspects of the world around us, or a world we'll see only on a piece of paper. Regardless, if you'd like to join in on the beauty of creativity, show up to Snodgrass 103 at 10:00 am on Tuesdays and 2:30 PM on Thursdays for Math Club!

Juneau

Continued from page 1

serves delicious Russian dumplings and charges only seven dollars a plate.

Saturday morning saw the start of business. We spent our entire day at the Westmark Baranof Hotel where we were informed as to what the Conference was all about. Around 9:30, we had a discussion with Senator Stevens, the Senate President and then had a presentation by Stephanie Butler on the APS and AEG. Immediately after the presentation, we had round-table discussions with some senators, representatives, and staffers.

Next, Dan Monteith, the chair of Faculty Alliance, gave us a presentation on current events that Faculty Alliance was concerned about. We concluded our first day's meetings with a discussion on what we had learned and observed. That day was important because it orientated us with the Coalition, helped make us comfortable in a new environment, and prepared us for talking to the legislators.

Once the day's work was over, Representatives Scott Kawasaki, Peggy Wilson, and Bob Miller invited the entire Coalition to a pizza bash at Bullwinkle's. The pizza bash was a great opportunity for us to get to know our representatives in a fun, casual setting.

On Sunday we were instructed on proper protocol and talking points while meeting with the legislators. Ann Ringstad, the UAF community advocacy director, gave us a presentation on the legislative process. On Sunday evening, we were given our schedules and then had strategy planning session until late at night.

Our first appointment on Monday was with Carl Gatto, the representative from the Palmer area. We had a nice chat about a couple current issues, and he promised to introduce us on the house floor at the 11:00 session. We then met with Linda Menard, the senator from the Palmer and Wasilla area.

When Senator Menard heard that I was an Alaska Performance Scholarship recipient, she said I should talk to the governor, and had her staff request an audience with the governor for us. We were told the governor had a busy schedule, but we would be called if a slot opened up.

At 2:00 pm I was informed that we had an appointment with the Governor at 3:15. Up until now, the Coalition had not been able to get an audience with the governor, but after Senator Menard got one for my group, the coalition was able to receive an audience with the governor in addition to the private audience that the Mat-Su College delegation.

After the audiences with the governor, we attended and ice cream social in the speaker of the house's chambers. We then had a meeting with Senator Charlie Huggins. Our business day ended there, but later that evening there was a party at Representatives Scott Kawasaki and Bill Wielechowski's house.

On Tuesday, my group had our last meeting with Wes Keller. We then spent the rest of the day relaxing until 3:00pm when the coalition leader informed us that he had been able to negotiate an audience with the lieutenant governor. After the meeting with the lieutenant governor, we went to the airport where we had supper and a debriefing and then flew home.

Our trip was extremely interesting and we learned a huge amount about how the legislative process works. The most important thing I learned was how easy it is to become involved in the political process and change the way things are done. Our elected officials are just people just like us and actually like to see us, talk to us, and hear our opinion.

Disc Cleaning Service in Library

By Jake Magoon

Ever try to watch a movie, listen to music, or play a game, only to be disappointed that you cannot, due to scratches on the disc? If this sounds familiar to you, don't throw away that disc!

The Mat-Su College library upgraded their disc cleaning machine over the summer, and it is now officially being offered as a service for $3 per cleaning. The machine runs automatically, and uses what amounts to four pieces of very, very fine sandpaper pads (of varying fineness between each) and treated water to restore the disc.

While it won't fix actual cracks in the disc, I watched a demonstration. The disc that went in to the machine certainly looked quite scratched to me, and although they assure me that it won't always come out of the machine looking flawless, but it will come out looking brand new. The machine fixes scratches on CDs, DVDs, and Blu-Ray.

If you'd like to have your disc cleaned, stop by the library and speak to someone at the front desk. There, they will put your disc into a safe, zipped bag, with its location being integrated into the library computer system, much like books. You then leave, and in approximately 24 hours, you can return to a newly working Blu-Ray disc for the low cost of $3. Just don't forget your library card!

Professor Profile

By Jake Magoon

One way or another, a student and their professor form an unspoken pact, an agreement which establishes the guidelines for expected behavior. In the worst case scenarios, this relationship mimics the old Soviet joke, taking on the form, "They pretend to teach, and we pretend to learn." When the relationship between the student, their peers, and their professor is functioning properly,

however, a different pact is made. This pact is one wherein the student makes an honest effort, dedicating many hours every week to the material, and in turn, the professor grades meticulously, believes in the student enough to push them to always do their best without relent, and serves as a daily source of inspiration. Jan Vandever is such a professor. The importance of instilling a sense of inspiration in the students cannot be overemphasized; however, the nature of a course taught by a professor dedicated to their craft is necessarily comprised of course material. After all, we pay and work hard, and they deliver. Unfortunately, this necessary course structure can often leave one towering source of inspiration woefully neglected: the story of how the professor transitioned from where we are today, to where they are now. It was in the spirit of rectifying this situation that I sat down and talked with Jan Vandever, Mathematics Ph.D.

Outside of her classroom in Snodgrass 124, Professor Vandever can be spotted traversing campus hallways, and on occasion, conversing with wild-eyed, enthusiastic students who have not quite yet had their fill of mathematics for the day. For those readers who have not yet taken a course taught by Professor Vandever, you can partake in this substantive opportunity by taking Math 107 – College Algebra, Math 108 – Trigonometry, Math 200 – Calculus, Math 201 – Calculus II, and Stat 252 – Elementary Statistics. Some courses taught alternate based upon semester, so get in early if you can.

Upon first glance, Jan's appearance is the calm, comfortable state of being afforded to those who have spent years mastering their craft, but nonetheless belies the extent of inner sharpness. One gets the feeling that she is observing many aspects of her environment simultaneously, a trait common amongst experienced teachers, prison guards, and CIA agents (or so I've been told). After getting to know her better, usually by taking a class or two, you begin to piece together that hard work, persistence, and belief in oneself have played a key role in Jan's success. Though nothing seems out of place with a female mathematics professor for today's generation, attitudes were not always this way, and understanding that helps explain just where some of that tenacity may have originated.

One thing is certain: Jan has always wanted to be a teacher. Part of the motivation to teach came from experiences with an unfortunately awful early algebra teacher. Instead of losing faith in herself, she knew she could do better. It was experiencing firsthand the way girls and young women were discouraged from involving themselves in mathematics, and taught not to believe in themselves, that helped motivate her to become both an attentive mathematics instructor, and a positive example for girls who would be taking her classes one day. Not all of Dr. Vandever's experiences with instructors were negative; in fact, Jan communicates regularly with her now-97-years-old high school English teacher, who is to this day as sharp as a tack. It is important to note that our role models have role models, and that we too may be role models one day. As an absolute automobile enthusiast, Jan had a little extra fun motivation along the way: averaging 2-3 new vehicles per year, Dr. Vandever observed an instructor with a very attractive automobile during an influential period in her life, and can now claim to owning, at one time or another, around 40 different vehicles.

Before she was Dr. Vandever, Professor of Mathematics, Jan received her Bachelor's of Science in 1967 from Monmouth University, with a minor in mathematics. It was after receiving her Master's in Education from Rutger's University, in 1971, that she had the confidence to take her mathematics education further. She then went on to get a second Master's from Colorado State University, in 1973, and then her Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of North Dakota. After completing her doctoral work and receiving her Ph.D., newly minted Doctor Vandever felt that it wasn't quite as scary as it is made out to be, and it certainly made her a stronger person. Though success had come, all of the challenges faced by mathematicians remained, with the additional challenges of being a woman in a field dominated by men. From teaching elementary school, to high school, to college, being treated differently became familiar. To be the only female in the math department meant to often be excluded from the social scene, such as male-only basketball games. During meetings on the job, voicing good ideas would be ignored because they originated from a woman. Nonetheless, female students needed an advocate they might not have otherwise had, and so Professor Vandever accepted her challenges and overcame.

When asked about her favorite memory of teaching, she replied that it was working with secondary education teachers who wanted to go on to teach math. Jan Vandever the professor cannot be understood without understanding where she's coming from; that is to say, her perspective on teaching. When a student says, "Oh, I wanted to do such and such, but math got in the way," this is something she regards as very sad, precisely because it is so unnecessary. As a student, the message I have received from her goes in part, "You are all capable of great things, and now I am going to force you to prove it to yourselves." The mathematician Tom Lehrer once said, "Some of you may have had occasion to run into mathematicians and wonder how they got that way." Professor Vandever's teaching style is clearly illuminated when you understand that our success is her success. In this sense, the dogged tenacity, attention to detail, high standards for excellence, and belief in ourselves is expected and encouraged precisely because this is what a teacher who holds those standards for themselves does. Regardless of what anyone else says or believes, unless we are truly trying, we are capable of far more than even we realize. If you'd like to find out what you can do, consider signing up for a class taught by Jan Vandever – just make sure to hold up your end of the pact.

Mat-Su College Student Government in Action

By Denise Reeve

Do you use the computer lab in the library? Mat-Su Student Government Council provided the funds to purchase the desks for every student to use.

The December finals week snack event was a huge success; Mat-Su Student Government Council provides moral support and snacks during that stressful period. We in the Mat-Su SGC hope you enjoyed the event!

The Mat-Su SCG welcomes the Healthy Dragons club; they were officially recognized as a club this January 2012. The Japanese Culture Club held a sushi fundraiser in the atrium in February, thanks for the food and the fun! Kudos to the Mat-Su Paramedics club! They recently held another successful blood drive in the front campus parking lot! The local blood bank and the MSPC had more than enough donors to exceed their goals. Thank you to everyone involved and everyone who donated. Your donation could very well save a life!

The first week of February, three students represented Mat-Su College (in conjunction with the UA Student Coalition) in Juneau. Senators Dawn Adamson, Grace Valley, and Stephan Warta met with State Senators, Representatives, and the Lt. Governor and the Governor in Juneau to learn the political ropes and share ideas about future needs for the campus. This is an annual trip to address needs and concerns regarding the UA system and Mat-Su College.

TEAM ART (revolution now!) celebrated Fred Machetanz's birthday by providing a beautiful cake topped with a rendering of Machetanz's polar bear and refreshments in the Atrium February 22, 2012.

Congratulations to The Mat-Su Carbon Crew for hosting DUNE LANKART to educate us all on the importance of environmental sustainability issues. The all day event held on February 24th was a huge success; we hope to see many more. The Metal Hedz held open lab from 3-5pm on Friday February 24th. More heavy metal noise! If you have an event, club meeting time, or information you wish SGC to include in the news, please contact Denise Reeve ext. 9759 (SGC office). This is just some of the things sponsored and accomplished by your Mat-Su Student Government Council. This is your student fee at work for you! If you have ideas or suggestions for the council, come visit any Wednesday (FSM 205) between 11:50 am and 1:00 pm and share your talents with us!

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Speaker Listens to Student Concerns

By Jake Magoon

On February 8th, 2012, Chaz St. George was a guest speaker at that day's Student Government meeting.

The purpose of his appearance was on behalf of the Strategic Direction Project, a project established by UAA with the goal of listening now in order to plan later. This is to say, when Chaz St. George came to speak about this project, he also described his visit as a listening tour, and many students did indeed have a chance to voice their opinions.

Once this data has been collected, it is to be factored into how policy is shaped in the future. Up until that moment in time, 20 "external" stakeholders had already been consulted and their feedback sought.

Students, faculty, etc, are regarded as "internal" stakeholders, and some of the feedback trends identified before he came to speak with us included requests for advisors that have less overall demand put upon them, more certificates and stackable degrees, efficiency in internships, and more inter-business cooperation.

After the introduction of purpose, and a few trend examples which got the ball rolling, the floor was turned over to the students who responded to his six following questions.

The first question posed to us was in regards to how the university can improve upon student advising. Overwhelmingly, the response was to give less of an overall work burden to each advisor.

When asked what aspects of credit transferability were working, people spoke very kindly about the fact that some credits from over 20 years ago are still good. However, when asked as to what is not working, in particular, the veterans present had many sympathetic stories about earning credits in the military and then being told they do not count now.

In regards to the rising cost of tuition, many students noted that the cost of classes impacts which classes they choose to take, with others commenting that they would love a payment plan as an option. Still, it was also mentioned that costs could be higher in a national comparison.

When Chaz asked the students what steps could be taken to improve needs-based scholarships, greater advertisement of financial aid opportunities was mentioned, along with putting a halt to the out-of-state "brain drain" via the use of incentivized financial aid.

Along with these ideas, came the suggestion that more merit-based scholarship opportunities be available for non-traditional students. When the speaker asked whether the audience experienced problems or issues with Blackboard, the question was met with rolling laughter throughout the room. It took a few moments for the laughter to settle before any attempts at replying were made. Many students complained of inconsistent expectations from instructor to instructor, and that the tutorials available are insufficient and confusing.

Lastly, the idea of consolidating the University Transcript Program into DegreeWorks was floated, and after some discussion, it was deemed an acceptable idea, so long as it is implemented with a universal transcript across the UA system. For those of you who missed the meeting and would like to make your voice heard, or would simply like more information, go to www.alaska.edu/shapingalaskasfuture/ .

Mat-Su Monitor Opportunities Available

By Denise Reeve

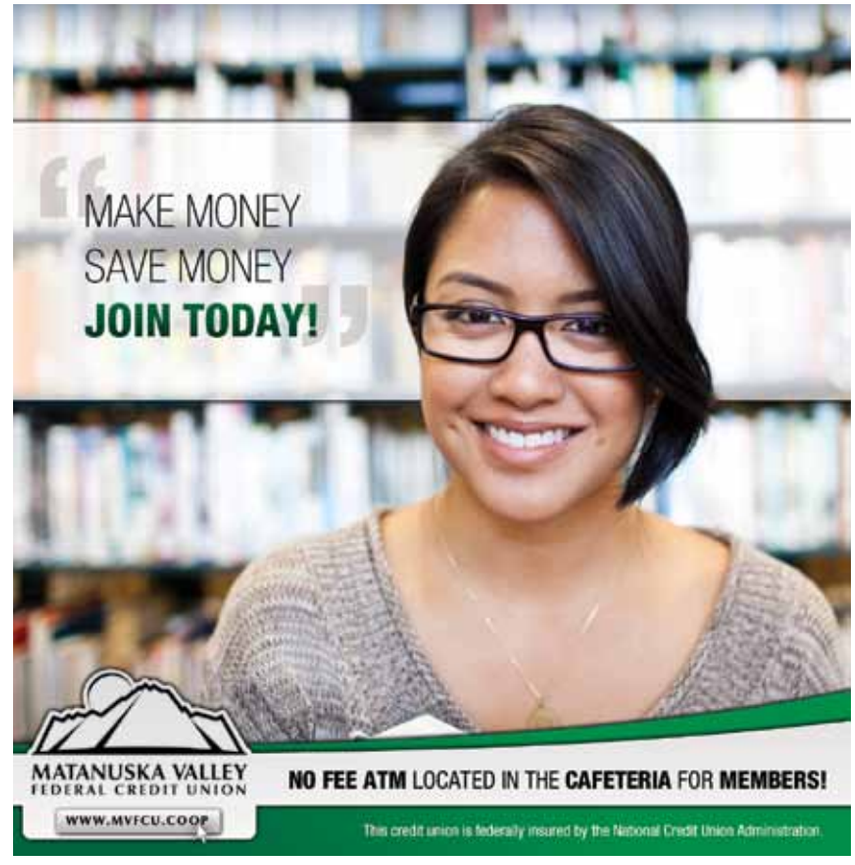
Do you pick up the new Mat-Su Monitor when you see it on campus? If not you really should. The Monitor, as it is affectionately known, is our campus newspaper, essentially the voice of the Mat-Su College students. But even more important, have you ever thought of adding your voice, well, your particular written opinions and views, to the Monitor?

Contributing to the paper is easier than you might think. The editor, Jake Magoon, and the Faculty advisor, Dr. Pete Praetorious are both happy to accept your submissions. Seriously, just send the article in.

The fact is the Mat-Su Monitor is completely under-utilized by the students at large. Every semester two or more editions of the Monitor are published and distributed not only on campus, but also inserted into the Frontiersman (the Mat-Su Valley newspaper) and distributed everywhere the Frontiersman goes.

If your club or affiliation has an event or information that needs to get out to the public, the Monitor does just that. Are you passionate about a certain subject? Take a little time to write a little something about that subject; utilize the opportunity to teach your fellow students (and the valley public) about your passion.

The Mat-Su Monitor is not just a paper; it reflects the life and experiences of its dynamic contributors, the students, as well as Mat-Su College. As a contributor myself, I have found the Mat-Su Monitor to be an eloquent outlet for sharing information important to all of us!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Lankard

Continued from page 1

difference, it is helpful to know a little about where he came from, and what he has accomplished. It is evident to all who observe him that Dune is a very intelligent man. Over his 23 year career of social change, he has received death threats and says that he was, "The most hated Native in Alaska for seven consecutive years." Yet, even the most passionate of his opponents would be forced to concede that Dune is a very sharp adversary.

However, in terms of the schooling, Dune began his career very much at odds with the system. It is precisely due to his proving that circumstances which might have bogged down others can not only be overcome, but can serve as conditions from which one can then thrive, that makes his story so inspiring.

When Dune was in high school, he received Cs, Ds, and Fs, due to his strained relationship with the system. However, by the time of the establishment of the billion-dollar out-of-court settlement with Exxon in 1992 in response to the Exxon-Valdez disaster (accomplished via the effective work of Dune Lankard and others), Dune had already taught himself law, yes, that notoriously intimidating area of study. Dune recalled for us waking up in the morning to stacks of thick law books left on his doorstep.

When he began his work, he stood alone, with no allies, and minimal support. However, upon receiving those books on law, Dune read and understood, and established the pattern of "Doing your homework," as he advised us to do, which would go on to become a theme. He has since received four scholarship offers from schools of law.

Dune has taken his real life education and accomplished far more than I have time to write about here today. Let me simply say that he took an unshakeable belief in himself, and the causes and people for which he fights, and builds communities which work together to accomplish major change. Much of this change includes partaking in multi-million dollar negotiations for the benefit of others. Other change involves incalculable environmental preservation. Regardless of the form it takes, Dune wants you to know that you have the power to change your world. As of this writing, Dune is currently in the Lower-48 on a speaking tour. However, in roughly six-weeks time, Dune Lankard will return to the Mat-Su College campus and graciously host an event detailing for us his hard-won practical knowledge relating to effective organizing and community problem solving.

If you would like to learn the organizational techniques that, when combined with belief in yourself, can lead to changing the world, keep your eyes open for fliers and announcements in regards to the date of his return. If you would like to learn more about Dune Lankard and his non-profit work, go to www.redzone.org, and stop by room 105 FSM from 1:00-3:00 PM on Thursdays to speak to David and the Mat-Su Carbon Crew.

Leadership Announced

By Denise Reeve

While the students were away on holiday break, the Mat-Su Student Government Council had some changes take place. Our president, Jason Warta, who is now taking most of his classes at UAA in Anchorage, stepped down and and Vice-President Keith Asche accepted the president's duties in his place. Asche also served as President of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

During his short term as president, Asche chose Senator Denise Reeve to serve as his vice-president. Active in student government and on campus for the last three years, Reeve has served in many ways, first as a club founder (Vett Assist & Metal Hedz) and representative (Team ART), as a senator, and has chaired many committees for the council. An excellent information technology asset, Asche was selected to fill full-time position at Mat-Su College, subsequently making him ineligible to remain president.

All of us active in the Student Government Council thank and appreciate both gentlemen for their tenure, enthusiasm, and service.

Vice-president Reeve willingly accepted and was approved by the council and the college to succeed President Asche. As her first order of business, President Reeve selected two individuals to share the responsibilities of vice-president. Dawn Adamson (vice-president #1) has served as President of TEAM ART, and most recently as a senator for student government, she currently chairs the planning committee. David Johnson (vice-president #2) is well known for his lively personality and his position as founder and representative for the MAT-SU Carbon Crew, he currently co-chairs the club council for SGC.

Congratulations and thanks to the past and current Student Government Council executive officers, senators, and club representatives for enthusiastically accepting the challenges and opportunities to serve the Mat-Su College students!

Would you like to be a part of student government? There is always room for talent and enthusiasm like yours. Come and see what's happening any Wednesday (FSM 205) between 11:50 am and 1:00 pm.

Gay-Straight Alliance

By Melissa Gianopoulos

This is the second semester of the Mat-Su College Gay Straight Alliance. We provide a non-judgmental place within the campus for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and allied students, as well as anyone else seeking a supportive environment.

The group does activities through-out the year. Last semester, we provided safe sex information for World AIDS Day, observed Transgender Awareness month in November, and donated to The Christina Mason Foundation which provides clothing, hygiene products, and cold weather gear to homeless youth in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. We will also be collecting donations for this foundation.

This semester, we will be observing Day of Silence where LGBTQ members and their allies take a vow of silence to represent the silence of LGBTQ teens who cannot speak up in their communities. During finals week, we will also have an LGBT-themed movie night where students can take a break from the stress of finals.

The Mat-Su College Gay Straight Alliance meets on Mondays from noon to one in room 213 in the library and on Wednesday from four to five with the room number TBA. Anyone is welcome join or visit us during our meetings. Snacks are provided.

Healthy Dragons Alert!

By Lisa Scott

Do you find it difficult to make time for proper nutrition and exercise? Maybe you just like learning in an environment that is both friendly and supportive. Perhaps you are just a curious type of a person.

You are cordially invited to visit our Healthy Dragons club every Tuesday at 12 noon in room 105 of FSM and on Wednesday at 1:00 pm in room FSM 103. We share our collective knowledge, tell of experiences, and sometimes we walk the halls for health. You can become a member by contacting Lisa Scott at healthydragons@yahoo.com.

Our main goal is to be supportive in your goal to become a healthy you. This is for everyone whether you are just starting or are already in great shape and would love to share with others. Hope to see you there!

Book Review: Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?

By Jake Magoon

The state of reading material today that is both popular, and maintains as a primary focus of concern the structure and nature of both human experience, and human society, is a sorry one indeed. Overpriced, large font, and riddled with slogans and nonsense, the gems of the genre of human experience require a bit of work to even be found on the market, and even more once they are acquired.

Slavoj Zizek, referred to (much to his chagrin) as, "The Elvis of Cultural Theory," utilizes Lacanian psychoanalysis with a Hegelian dialectical approach to reexamine much of what we think we know. In his work, "Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?" Zizek illustrates concepts normally hidden-away in "high theory" via find examples in popular culture, from The Matrix to James Bond, with his trademark spattering of dirty jokes scattered throughout.

This book is not for the timid: his writing style conveys a great deal with few words…but at the cost of making the book a bit more challenging to read. While at times this may be frustrating, if you happen to feel as I do, and are both interested in learning new things about the world and also suspect that there are certain fascinating notions which unfortunately cannot be explained at an 8th grade reading level, then I absolutely encourage you to read this book. If reading, "Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?" gave me one gift, it was satisfaction.

Post-Secret Mat-Su

By Jake Magoon

Last semester, there was talk of the existence of a column in this newspaper which allowed every member of our diverse community to express, given just a few lines, the true nature of how they feel about…well, anything!

This service would be completely anonymous via the establishment of a locked suggestion box. Comments, thoughts, and feelings which are spoken in truth bridge the gap between the individuals which comprise our community, and help destroy the illusion of our greatly exaggerated differences.

The idea for this set-up was inspired by the original Post-Secret – if you don't know what that is, I highly recommend you submit that to your search engine of choice. With the safety of anonymity, and an audience you know shall be reading, whiles others are expressing themselves, some readers are reading and thinking, "Oh wow, I guess it isn't just me after all…" If anyone is interested in working on making the Post-Secret Mat-Su into a reality, please email me at jmagoon@alaska.edu .

Kayla Cooney accepts her certificate at the February 24th Deans List reception which honored students with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Mat-Su Monitor would like to thank the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman for all of their support. Call (907) 352-2250 to learn about home delivery.

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